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Macquarie Dictionary chooses 'toxic debt' as 2008 word of the year

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Staff and wires
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UPDATE 2pm: AUSTRALIA'S leading dictionary has dubbed "toxic debt" 2008 word of the year. Read more of the nominees here.

The term comes as the effect of the **global financial crisis** continues to hit home.

By definition, the noun is a “debt which, although initially acquired as a legitimate business transaction, proves subsequently to be financially worthless, as the subprime loans which precipitated the GFC".

In the end, toxic debt edged out “bromance" (“a non-sexual but intense friendship between two males"); “textaholic" (“someone who sends an excessive number of text messages"); and “flashpacker" (“a backpacker who travels in relative luxury").

Macquarie Dictionary sages chose the term after its committee mulled over the year’s most important events.

Publisher Sue Butler said environment and water issues also were examined.

“But the event of 2008 which overshadows all our lives was the GFC, itself a term now added to the lexicon," Ms Butler said.

“In this category, 'toxic debt' was thought to be the root cause, the lingering blight on our lives, and in addition it had, as a lexical creation, a visceral impact. It needed no explanation but said it all."

Also in the “honourable mentions” include guerilla gardener (a person who plants gardens in neglected public areas such as nature strips, roundabouts and council parks); and “lawfare” (the use of international law to attack another country on moral grounds).

And topping various categories include:

• Audiation (“the process by which one plays over in one's mind music that one has heard, which intrudes itself sometimes to an unpleasant degree.”);
• Baby brain (“the perceived diminished mental capacity, as characterised by forgetfulness, loss of concentration, etc., thought to be a side effect of pregnancy.”);
• Bullycide (“suicide which is a reaction to being bullied.”);
• Car crash TV (“a television program that is simultaneously absorbing and repulsive for the viewer”);
• Celeblog (“a blog written by a celebrity”);
• Celebutard (“a celebrity who is regarded as excessively stupid.”);
• Chess boxing (“a sport which alternates a round of boxing with a round of chess.”);
• Chicken-wing tackle (“an illegal tackle (in Rugby League) in which the arm of the person tackled is pushed up behind his back.”);
• Click-and-mortar (“adjective of or relating to a company which has operations both online and offline”);
• Climate porn (“predictions, thought to be exaggeratedly alarmist, about the progress of global warming and its effects on the world.”);
• Divorce gene (“men with a variant of this gene … may have a lowered motivation towards a social bonding with their partner”)
• Ear gauging an ear piercing procedure that involves the stretching of the pierced hole with a series of objects, each one larger than the previous one
• Ecocentrism (“a philosophy based on the idea that the ecosphere is more central to life than any particular organism”);
• Extreme programming (“the style of programming required for agile development.”);
• Fanta pants (“a person whose hair is naturally red”);
• Film tourism (“tourism occasioned by the wish to visit a well-known location used in a film or television production; set jetting.”);
• Fur child (“a pet animal, as a cat or dog, treated as one would a child.”);
• Generation Z (“the generation born in the early 2000s, following generation Y, characterised as being at ease with computer technology, online and mobile phone communication.”);
• GIS (“a computer system that can capture, store, analyse, and present in various ways data that locates places on the earth's surface.”);
• Granny season (“(in Australia) winter, during which many older members of the population travel north, especially with caravans, campervans, etc.”);
• Guerilla dining (“dining at a restaurant that has been set up temporarily in an unused space such as a car park, beach, rooftop or a private home”)
• Helicopter parenting (“a style of child rearing in which parents are excessively attentive to and involved in the lives of their children;
• Hybrid embryo (“an embryo which has a human cell nucleus inserted into an animal egg; developed to create stem cells to be used in medical treatments.”);
• Lifestreaming (“the online recording of one's daily life, delivered either by means of a webcam, or aggregated from personal blogs, microblogs”);
• Linkbait (“to create points of interest in (a website) so that other sites will link to it and increase traffic”);
• Lolcat (“a photograph of an animal, usually a cat, posed or digitally edited and humorously captioned using elements of baby talk, SMS coding, etc., in the text.”);
• Nomophobia (“a state of anxiety brought on by not having mobile phone contact, as from a low battery, no network coverage, etc.”)
• Pimp cup (“a goblet-shaped glass, usually brightly coloured and highly decorated, often with the owner's name picked out in rhinestones.”);
• Plastic soup (“a floating mass of waste, mainly plastic, which accumulates at the point in the ocean where a gyre is

located”);
• Pod person (“someone who unquestioningly accepts authority, taking all ideas, dogmas, policies, etc., without question.”);
• Saviour sibling (“a child selected in embryo for genetic characteristics which can be of benefit to an existing brother or sister with an illness, especially for potentially curative stem cells to be used in medical treatments.”);
• Scene kid (“a person who adopts an unconventional style of dress, such as coloured hair worn high on the head, dramatic eyeliner and straight jeans, and who prefers hip-hop, screamo, punk rock, and other offbeat genres of music);
• Sexting (“the receiving or sending of a sexually explicit photo or video clip on a mobile phone”);
• Shwopping (“the exchange of items of clothing and accessories for a similar item offered by someone else on a website designed to facilitate such an exchange.”)
• Sugging (“attempting to sell under the guise of conducting market research, often with incentives attached to lead the potential customer to a purchase.”)
• Toad buster (“a person engaged in the eradication of the cane toad”);
• Torino scale (“a scale for categorising the impact hazard posed by near-earth objects, such as asteroids and comets.”);
• Transformative justice (“a form of justice which seeks to involve all parties, wrongdoers, victims, families, and friends, in a process of understanding the motivation and the consequences of the crime”);
• tunneling (“a tactic (in Australian Rules) used by a player to unbalance an opponent going for a mark by knocking their legs sideways while they are in the air.”);
• Twitterverse (“the world of microbloggers.”)
• uberveillance (“an omnipresent electronic surveillance facilitated by technology that makes it possible to embed surveillance devices in the human body.”); and,
• Wii shoulder (“painful inflammation of the shoulder caused by excessive playing of virtual computer games involving movement.”).

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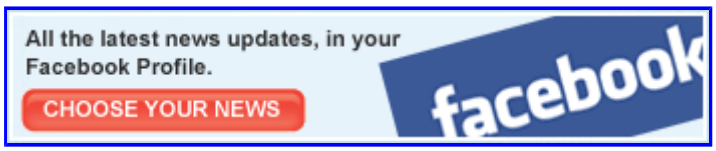

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